



MontCAS

September 2013 Newsletter



Welcome to *JUMP*, the OPI online assessment newsletter. *JUMP* is published several times during the year to announce important assessment and data events. It provides up-to-date information necessary for the administration of statewide assessments and the accompanying data collections.

In this issue:

- State assessment schedule
- Fall professional development and webinars
- New Test Coordinator Academy
- CRT & CRT-ALT student reports and MARS information
- Special needs students and MontCAS
- CRT-Alternate information and registration
- Smarter Balanced online practice tests and tech readiness updates
- The new alternate assessment information hub
- ELP: Professional development and the new guidance document
- Fall ACT tasks
- Fall MontCAS Presents courses
- Save the Date: Assessment Data Conference 2014

Ashley Makowski

Administrative Assistant
406-444-3511
amakowski@mt.gov

Yvonne Field

Assessment Specialist
406-444-0748
yfield@mt.gov

Judy Snow

State Assessment
Director
406-444-3656
jsnow@mt.gov

2013-2014 Statewide Assessment Schedule	
December 4, 2013 – January 29, 2014	ELP Assessment Window
January 15-17, 2014	State Assessment/Data Conference, Red Lion, Helena
February 17 – March 25, 2014	CRT-Alternate, Grades 3-8 and 10, Reading and Math; Grades 4, 8, and 10, Science The first week of this window is intended for training and the preparation of materials.
March 3-25, 2014	<i>CRT, Grades 3-8 and 10, Reading and Math</i> <i>These dates are being held until approval of Superintendent Juneau's request to the US Department of Education to substitute the Smarter Balanced Field Test for the CRT in Reading and Math to avoid double testing. Details are available at the following link: http://www.opi.mt.gov/opi_Summary/index.php and on page 5 of this newsletter.</i>
March 3 -25, 2014	Grades 4, 8, and 10, CRT Science
April 23-May 7, 2014	ACT Plus Writing for Public School Students in Grade 11 Wednesday, April 23, 2014: Initial test day (NOTE: It moves from a Tuesday to a Wednesday in 2014) May 7, 2014: Makeup test day April 23-May 7, 2014: Accommodated testing window
TBA-Spring 2014	Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Summative Assessment Field Test English Language Arts and Math, Grades 3-8 and 11

Upcoming Professional Development and Webinars

September 3 3:30-4:30 PM	New Test Coordinator Academy http://connect.opi.mt.gov/ntca These webinars will take place on a monthly basis.
September 4 3:30-4:00 PM	Test Coordinator Updates and Deadlines http://connect.opi.mt.gov/tc
September 10 3:30-4:30 PM	ELP Monthly Webinar: Being Prepared: WIDA overview, identification, fall tasks, and updates http://connect.opi.mt.gov/elp
September 16 3:30-4:30 PM	ACT Updates and Deadlines http://connect.opi.mt.gov/act
September 19	NCSC Presentation at MCASE Connecting with the Common Core: The Big Ideas of the New Alternate Assessment
September 30 3:30-4:30 PM	NCSC Monthly Webinar Connecting with the Common Core: The Big Ideas of the New Alternate Assessment http://connect.opi.mt.gov/alt
October 17-18	MEA-MFT Conference Assessment Presentations English Language Learners in Montana Connecting with the Common Core: The Big Ideas of the New Alternate Assessment Assessment Transitions

New Test Coordinator Information

If your system has a new System Test Coordinator this school year, please contact **Ashley Makowski**, the OPI assessment administrative assistant at **(406)444-3511**. Please provide the Test Coordinator's name, email address, phone number, shipping address, and mailing address. OPI assessment staff contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

Test coordinator information is also collected with schools' data during [the OPI annual data collection](#); however, time-sensitive information will be sent to System Test Coordinators prior to the ADC collection.

New Test Coordinator Academy:

This year we will be hosting monthly webinars for new test coordinators on the first Tuesday of every month from 3:30-4:30 PM. The webinar link is: <http://connect.opi.mt.gov/ntca>. There is no need to register. The meeting space will open a half hour before the webinar is due to begin. To enter the meeting space, click on the link and choose to *enter as guest*. External microphones are optional.

These webinars will provide an opportunity to ask questions of the assessment staff, explore a timely topic in depth, and will provide information on test coordination tasks for each month. For more information contact: Yvonne Field at (406)444-0748, yfield@mt.gov



MARS, the Montana Analysis and Reporting System, is a secure online site accessible with the usernames and passwords assigned to schools and districts. The MARS site can be accessed with the following link:
<http://iServices.MeasuredProgress.org>

User Names and Passwords

- Test Coordinator's and Principal's *MARS* usernames and passwords will remain the same.
- Please remember these are master passwords and are only for the superintendent, building principals, authorized representatives, or system test coordinators. All other educators needing access to *MARS* should be assigned a separate username and password using the Accounts Management tool in *MARS*.
- A short prerecorded webinar, [MARS Account Management](#), provides directions for assigning passwords.
- If a teacher was assigned to a student in the "Sort by" field in AIM for the 2013 testing, a new 2013 password will automatically be generated and posted in the "Teacher Roster."
- The Teacher Roster can be accessed on the Principal's homepage in *MARS*.
- If a teacher was not assigned to a student(s) in AIM, the test coordinator/principal will need to make the assignments and create new passwords using the Accounts Management tool in *MARS*.
- If you need password assistance, please contact Ashley Makowski at: 406-444-3511, amakowski@mt.gov.

Accessing the *MARS User Manual*

- The *MARS User Manual* contains detailed instructions on using *MARS*.
- Navigate to: <http://iServices.MeasuredProgress.org>
- Select "**Montana**" or "**Montana ALT**" (either works for both CRT and CRT-ALT) from the dropdown menu and click "Enter."
- Log in with your username and password
- Select Supporting Documents
- For the *User Manual*, select "Forms and Manuals"

MARS Training Webinars

In addition to the *MARS* user manual, the assessment division has created four *MARS* webinar training modules. These can be accessed on the CRT&ALT Results Page on the *MARS* tab:

http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/MontCAS/index.html?gpm=1_5&tpm=5_4&tpm=8_2

Student Reports

The CRT and CRT-Alternate system and school summary reports, student reports, interactive data, and the *MARS* user manual are posted on the secure Measured Progress iServices site:

<https://iServices.MeasuredProgress.org>

Student Reports

On August 28, 2013 Measured Progress sent a shipment with student reports, parent letters, cumulative labels, and memos with instructions on how to distribute materials. There will be letters to accompany the Individual Student Reports for students who participated in the CRT with a nonstandard accommodation(s).

- Please read the letter and send it **ONLY with reports that indicate a nonstandard accommodation(s)**.
- If a report indicates the student took the CRT with a nonstandard accommodation(s), the letter should accompany the report home.
 - **Please do not send the letter with all reports.**
- In some cases, student results were invalidated due to testing irregularities. Each district and school has been notified.
 - The reports for those students with **invalidated results** will indicate the invalidation(s).
 - It is recommended that the students' parents/guardians be contacted prior to their receiving the reports.

Reports for home-schooled students who took the CRT or CRT-Alternate in your school:

- The results for these students are not included in any of your system or school reports on **MARS**.
- In September, you (or the County Superintendent) will receive the printed Individual Student Report and cumulative file label for each home-schooled student who took the test in your school.
- Please contact the County Superintendent to arrange delivery of these items to the parents/guardians.

Special Needs Students and MontCAS

Planning Ahead for Special Needs

Fall Tasks:

1. Review IEPs to determine accommodations for classroom instruction and assessments
2. Register students for the CRT-Alternate
3. Order Braille and large-print versions of the CRT

Best Practices: IEPs and Accommodations

Each student with a disability must have in place, an IEP or a 504 plan which describes how the student will participate in the annual statewide assessment. All students with disabilities must participate in the statewide assessment if they are in grades 3-8 or grade 10. Most students with disabilities will participate in the CRT using no accommodations or using the standard accommodations available to all students. A few students, because of their unique needs, will take the CRT using non-standard accommodations.

<http://opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/CRT/TA/14Accommodations-Guidance-Memo-9-2014YFedits.pdf>

The CRT-Alternate

A very small percentage of the population will be administered the CRT-ALT. This form of the CRT is only available to students who have an IEP and who meet the criteria as a student with a significant cognitive disability. The case managers need to notify the System Test Coordinator as soon as possible of the students at each grade level that need to be administered the CRT-ALT. The materials for the CRT-ALT take time to produce, and it is important that this task is not put off until the last minute.

Below is a table with the registration windows for students eligible for the CRT-Alternate. After December 2nd, the windows are specifically for students newly enrolled in your schools. A link with directions for registration will be emailed to system test coordinators in October.

Registration window for students eligible for the CRT-Alternate	
October 7, 2013-December 2, 2013	For students currently enrolled in your school
January 2, 2014-January 14, 2014	For students who enroll in your school after December 2, 2013
After January 14, 2014	For students who enroll after January, 14, 2014, please contact Ashley Makowski, 406-444-3511, amakowski@mt.gov

How to Register Students for the CRT-Alternate:

[Registering Students for the CRT-Alternate Assessment](#)

Guidelines for eligibility for the CRT-Alternate are online at:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/CRT/TA/10How to Include Students with Disabilities.pdf>

JUMP Smarter

No “Double-Testing” for 2013-2014

In July, OPI submitted a request for an amendment to our NCLB Accountability Workbook for the 2013-14 school year. This request is for Montana to discontinue giving the current MontCAS and allow 100% of Montana students to participate in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) field test this spring. If granted, this request would prevent double testing that is possible for some Montana students if we administered the MontCAS and participated in the SBAC field test. This option allows us to try out the new online assessment, test our technology, and have teachers and students see how it works without concern for the results being used for accountability purposes. And, next year, we are at 100% proficiency— so whatever state assessment we use – no school is going to make AYP. We are awaiting word from the US Department of Education and are unsure of their timeline to review and respond to our request. We are moving forward with our planning at the state level on the assumption our request will be approved and will notify you when we hear from the Department and provide the information you will need to prepare to participate in the SBAC field test. Contact: Deputy Superintendent Dennis Parman, 444-5643, dparman@mt.gov

Online Practice Tests

Teachers, parents, and students in Montana can now access online practice tests aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The Practice Tests provide a preview of the types of questions that will be featured in the summative assessment beginning in 2014-15, including selected-response items, constructed-response items, technology-enhanced items, and performance tasks—extended activities that challenge students to apply their knowledge and skills to respond to realworld problems. The practice tests allow teachers and students to experience the Common Core tests and gain familiarity with the online test delivery system.

Click on the link below to access the practice tests:

NOTE! The practice test can ONLY be opened in the following browsers:

- Mozilla Firefox
- Google Chrome
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 10
- Apple Safari

<http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/>

Click on the links below for more information:

[Practice Test Fact Sheet](#)

[Practice Test Scoring Guides](#)

[Smarter Balanced Parent Fact Sheet](#)

What can your school/district do right now to prepare for the SBAC assessments?

✓ Build a District/School SBAC Team:

- Administration
- Testing Coordinator
- IT staff
- Special Education
- Data staff

✓ Use the Tech Readiness Tool

New Tech Readiness Tool Launched

On August 12, 2013 a new version of the Technology Readiness Tool (TRT) was launched. Enhancements include better reports, a "scenario calculator," and a more user-friendly home page. With the availability of SBAC practice tests, now is a perfect time to update your TRT data or establish your TRT account. Watch the training videos linked below to learn more about TRT 3.0.

- Module 1: [Devices, Surveys, and Completion Status](#)
- Module 2: Results and Indicators

To request a TRT account, visit <http://techreadiness.net> and click on "request account."

If you have questions, please contact the Montana State Readiness Coordinator (SRC) Colet Bartow, (406) 444-3583, cbartow@mt.gov.

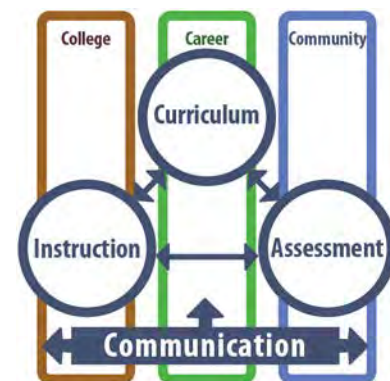
A **Technology Readiness Calculator** is available to help schools **estimate the number of days and associated network bandwidth required to complete Smarter Balanced assessments**. This tool allows districts and schools to enter the number of students, number of computers, and number of hours per day that computers are available for testing. The calculator is available through the Technology page of the Smarter Balanced website at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/technology/>.



Alternate Assessment

Transitioning to a New Alternate Assessment

The **National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC)** is a project led by five centers and 28 states (18 core states and 10 Tier II states) to build an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS), developed from the Common Core Standards. The alternate assessment is intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.



Alternate Assessment Hub

Looking for more information on the new alternate assessment? Explore the alternate assessment hub for media, upcoming events, a blog, and to connect with the Community of Practice members here:

http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/montCAS/MCCS/index.php?gpm=1_6&tpm=6_4&tpm=19_1

Fall Presentations

September 30, 2013 3:30-4:30	Monthly NCSC Webinar <i>What is NCSC? Transitioning to the New Alternate Assessment</i> We will talk about upcoming test design opportunities, get in-depth on one topic, and answer questions about the transition to the new alternate assessment. The webinar will be recorded and posted for viewing later. Webinar Link: http://connect.opi.mt.gov/alt
October 17, 2013 3:00-3:50PM	MEA-MFT Conference Transitioning to the New Alternate Assessment



English Language Proficiency Assessments

Montana's English Language Learners: Guidance for School Districts

A new guidance document has been completed and posted to provide guidance to school districts on serving Montana's English language learners. The document is available for viewing and printing on the OPI website. Feedback is welcomed. [Montana's English Language Learners: Guidance for School Districts](#)

Identification

Identification of English language learners is on many of our minds at the beginning of the school year. For guidance on the identification process, including a sample identification flow chart see pages 6-10 of [Montana's English Language Learners: Guidance for School Districts](#).

Need help **accessing the W-APT screening assessment materials** on the [WIDA website](#)? Contact your System Test Coordinator or Yvonne Field at: 406-444-0748 or yfield@mt.gov.

WIDA National Conference

Some funding is available to assist educators to attend WIDA's first national conference. For more information on the conference visit: www.widaconference.us. For information on financial assistance to attend the conference contact: Lynn Hinch at 406-444-3482 or lhinch@mt.gov

Free Professional Development Opportunities:

The More, the Merrier. . . Differentiating for ELLs

Nov. 18 – Billings, Nov. 20 – Great Falls, Nov. 22 - Missoula

8:00-8:30 AM – Registration, 8:30–3:30 PM – Training, 11:30-12:15 - Working lunch, provided onsite, 3:30-4:30 – MT OPI informal support, questions/answers time

This workshop, designed as an introductory level training for school teams of 3-5 members, (one administrator and 2-4 teachers), working in an educational setting with English language learners. Opportunities will be provided to explore academic language differentiation during content instruction and assessment.

Participants will use WIDA's English language proficiency (ELP) assessment data and the CAN DO Descriptors. School teams are to bring their most recent ELP data (W-APT, MODEL or 2013 ACCESS for ELLs) for their current students.

For more information/registration contact: Yvonne Field at 406-444-0748, yfield@mt.gov, Lynn Hinch at 406-444-3482, lhinch@mt.gov

ACCESS for ELLs Media-Based Listening Subtest

New for this year's ACCESS for ELLs, is the roll out of the new media-based listening subtest, which will debut on Series 302 in 2013-14 school year. Training resources for the media delivered listening test have been developed and will be posted on the [WIDA website](#) within the next few weeks.

ASSETS News:

The WIDA consortium is working on a new online test to replace the current paper format of the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. The new online test will be operational in the 2015-2016 school year. Montana will participate in field testing in February 2015 in one domain only: listening.

Montana Educator Recognized by WIDA

Congratulations to Christine Wagner - Jonsson (Bozeman School District) for being selected as WIDA's Featured Educator for September.

Here is a link to the article about her on the WIDA website:

<http://www.wida.us/getInvolved/featuredEducator.aspx>



ACT Plus Writing

Accommodations Webcast

September 9 – The accommodations webcast for the ACT will become available online. The webcast is intended for Test Accommodations Coordinators and will discuss ACT-Allowed Accommodations and State-Allowed Accommodations, the requirements for applying for accommodations, and the difference in scoring between the two.

Test Center Establishment Packets

Principals will receive test center establishment packets during the week of September 23. They will be asked to appoint staff as Test Supervisor (TS), Back-up Test Supervisor (BU), and Test Accommodations Coordinator (TAC).



Professional Development Online

MontCAS Presents will offer another round of courses beginning October 14. These courses are a great way to connect with educators across the state while learning about formative assessment and the Montana Common Core Standards. Graduate credit or renewal units are available.

Courses this fall include:

Teaching the ACT Plus Writing – Kris Gardner
Formative Assessment I&II – Stevie Schmitz
Teaching the Writing Strand of MCCS – Dana Haring
Standards-Based IEP's – Gail McGregor
MCCS: Standards for Mathematical Practice – Becky Berg

Please visit our [MontCAS Presents](#) page for more information.



2014 Assessment/Data Conference

Save the Date

All Aboard: College and Career Ready

We will host our annual Assessment and Data Conference in Helena January 15-17 at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel.

Testing Contractor Information

The CRT and the CRT-Alternate—Measured Progress, Inc.

- Dan Verdick, Montana CRT Program Manager
 - dverdick@measuredprogress.org or 800-431-8901x2220
- Tim Greenlaw, Montana CRT-Alternate Program Manager
 - greenlaw.timothy@measuredprogress.org or 800-431-8901x2309

ACCESS and the W-APT, English Language Proficiency Assessments WIDA Consortium

- Questions about online trainings and the WiDA website
 - help@wida.us or 1-866-276-7735
- Questions about data or testing materials
 - mtinfo@metritech.com or 800-747-4868

ACT Plus Writing

- Testing questions: 800-553-6244x2800
- Accommodations questions: 800-553-6244x1788

Smarter Balanced Practice Test Help Desk

- Phone: 855-833-1969
- Email: smarterbalancedhelpdesk@ets.org

Quote of the Month

“Any growth requires a temporary loss of security.”
~Madeline Hunter